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“US Policy Toward East Asia and the Pacific.” Remarks by Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord before a House International Relations subcommittee regarding US foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region. (950227)

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U.S. Policy Toward East Asia and the **Pacific** Winston **Lord**, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and **Pacific** Affairs Statement before the Subcommittee on Asia and **Pacific** Affairs of the House International Relations Committee, Washington, DC, February 9, 1995

Mr. Chairman: Thank you for the invitation to speak before the Asia and **Pacific** Affairs Subcommittee so early in this session of the 104th Congress. It is a distinct pleasure to sketch for you a broad overview of U.S. policy for the East Asia and **Pacific** region under the Clinton Administration. I reiterate the Administration’s commitment to working with this Congress to shape an active bipartisan policy that will advance our national interests in the world’s most dynamic region.

In addition to submitting the full text of these opening remarks, I would like, with your permission, to place in the record the text of my January 1995 address to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

I have just returned from a 10-day, five-country tour through Asia with Deputy Secretary Talbott. I was once again struck by America’s large stakes in the region as well as the strong desire there that the United States remain engaged.

The Asia-**Pacific** region is impressive for its diversity and dynamism. Geographically, it embraces a broad swath of all four hemispheres, stretching roughly 8,000 miles westward from the U.S. mainland to Burma and 8,000 miles southward from Alaska to **New Zealand**. Its ethnic and religious diversity blends with some of the world’s richest cultures. It includes several of the last communist regimes in the world—Vietnam, North Korea, and China—as well as free societies such as Japan and Australia and newer democracies, such as Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Cambodia, and Mongolia.

Economically, the Asia-**Pacific** region has become the most robust and important area in the world. The 18 members of the Asia-**Pacific** Economic Cooperation—APEC—forum account for more than one-third of the world’s population and produce \$14 trillion in goods and services annually— about half of the world’s GDP. Even excluding the U.S., the output of the region still surpasses that of the European Union. East Asia is the destination of nearly a third of total U.S. exports and accounts for over 2.5 million American jobs. American sales in Asia are growing more rapidly than anywhere else.

The region is not uniformly affluent, however. It is also home to grinding poverty. It is no coincidence that the poorest countries generally have some of the most repressive regimes, while the more affluent are among the most free.

Strategically, the Asia-**Pacific** is the region where four of the world’s major powers intersect. We have fought three wars there in the past half-century. Here at home, our population has been shifting toward the **Pacific** and is increasingly enriched by large numbers of Asian immigrants.

The hopes for a peaceful and prosperous future are promising, provided the United States stays actively engaged.

The Clinton Administration's Approach

During the last two years, the Clinton Administration has confronted head-on the post-Cold War world with all its advantages and ambiguities. The **Pacific** arena has been no exception. We have sought to define for Americans the huge U.S. interest in the region and to heighten U.S. engagement. We have promoted the full range of U.S. goals. In addition to more traditional concerns, this includes a new emphasis on advancing global issues such as narcotics control, population planning, AIDS prevention and treatment, environmental protection, and cooperation to curb international crime.

The broad outlines of U.S. policy toward the region were articulated by President Clinton during his first overseas trip, to Japan and Korea in July 1993. At that time, he set forth his vision of "a New **Pacific** Community built on shared strength, shared prosperity, and a shared commitment to democratic values." The Administration views the three pillars of this policy—prosperity, security, and freedom—as mutually reinforcing elements. We have been pursuing each of these through a variety of initiatives, policies, statements, and trips—in the process seeking to raise the profile of Asia in our policy and public consciousness. Let me now briefly review what has been accomplished and then discuss the specific ways in which we would hope to continue making progress in the year ahead.

Prosperity

In an era of relative peace in the Asia-**Pacific** region, we have been able to focus heavily on ensuring that the United States contributes to and benefits from the dynamic economic growth of the region. Within the context of America's global efforts to promote free trade through the GATT and, now, WTO, we have been working bilaterally and regionally to remove barriers to trade and to ensure America's economic place in the **Pacific** community.

In 1993, when we were the chair of APEC, we played an active role in developing that young organization into a more effective vehicle for promoting economic growth and trade liberalization in the Asia-**Pacific** region. In Seattle in the fall of 1993, the President elevated the APEC forum to the leaders' level by convening the first-ever meeting of Asia-**Pacific** leaders and, with those leaders, shaped an economic vision statement for the **Pacific**.

In Bogor last year, the second APEC leaders' meeting, under Indonesia's leadership, made a commitment to achieve open and free trade in the region by the year 2020. In Osaka this November, we look toward a blueprint, developed under Japan's leadership, to move APEC toward this bold vision. The Osaka action agenda will set the work program for APEC for the next 10 years. We need a comprehensive and credible agenda that commits APEC to a course of active trade and investment liberalization. We see APEC not as a trade bloc nor a formal trade agreement like NAFTA but, rather, as a building block for global trade liberalization and a spur to freer trade in other regions.

We also have been working bilaterally to open markets. We have made progress on economic issues a central element in our relations with Japan. Through the U.S.-Japan framework talks, we have reached a series of important sectoral agreements and promoted macroeconomic stimulus in Japan. But there is much unfinished business in the automotive sector, deregulation, and the faithful implementation of agreements reached. However sporadically, Japan is moving toward a genuine multiparty system with more competition for consumer votes and, therefore, greater pressure for access to foreign suppliers. Still, significant Japanese trade surpluses, even if at somewhat lower levels, are likely to persist for the foreseeable future. We do not seek to balance trade bilaterally; what we do seek are genuinely open markets and a fair opportunity to compete.

the successor to GATT. We continue to strongly support China's membership, but its accession must be based on firm commitments to the basic rules and disciplines of the GATT/WTO. The Chinese leaders' willingness to open their system to foreign competition has been complicated by the recent uncertainty in China's domestic economic situation and the transition to the post-Deng era.

We have negotiated down protectionist barriers with other trade partners including Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan. We have consulted individually and collectively with the six dynamic ASEAN economies, which together are our fourth-largest trading partner.

Economics has thus become a core element of our overall policy toward the Asia-**Pacific**. Active economic engagement helps to anchor America in the region, not only in trade and investment but also in security and political terms.

Security

In a region where the major powers meet, we have large, abiding security interests. Relations among these nations are more stable today than they have been at any time in this century. Managing those interrelationships is, nevertheless, a key challenge in the years ahead. How are we working to consolidate these favorable circumstances?

We are maintaining our forward military presence in the Western **Pacific**. The bottom-up review concluded that the U.S. interest in deterring aggression and preserving stability requires us to maintain the capabilities that are provided now by an active forward presence of approximately 100,000 troops. While the specific composition of our forces may change, our commitment to maintain our capabilities and active engagement in the real security challenges of the region must not. The Department of Defense soon will publish a new report on our strategy in the region which will clearly affirm this.

Our alliance with Japan is strong and remains the linchpin of our defense posture in Asia. We have insulated our security ties from our trade frictions while making the point that, if left unattended, economic frictions could eventually affect our overall relationship. We have worked with Japan on what we call our "Common Agenda" on global issues and successfully enhanced a global partnership with Japan—one which also is reflected in our support for Japan's becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Relations with China are crucial. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has nuclear weapons, and is destined to become a global economic power. It has a major impact on regional issues and on global challenges such as the environment. We have a clear national interest in seeing that China is integrated into the international system on appropriate terms, whether it is the WTO, APEC, the ASEAN Regional Forum, non-proliferation agreements, or compliance with international human rights standards. We welcome China's participation in both global and regional economic and security forums.

Nearly one and a half years ago, the President initiated our policy of comprehensive engagement. We continue, through high-level dialogue and working-level talks with China, to pursue our national interest. We have had modest success in securing China's cooperation on certain issues, including international peace-keeping, the North Korean nuclear issue, missile exports, narcotics, alien smuggling, and regional security dialogue. In recent months, however, differences over the sensitive issue of Taiwan, human rights, and trade have taken center stage. Resolving these differences is made more difficult by China's succession politics.

We are, therefore, in a difficult phase in our relationship. We must continue to pursue constructive relations with China—one of the key powers in the world, but we must also show firm resolve whenever necessary. We have maintained Tiananmen-related sanctions, have taken firm trade steps where necessary, and are pursuing human rights issues in various ways. At the same

The people of Taiwan also have benefited from our strong but unofficial relationship. The famous Taiwan economic “miracle” has made it the 13th- largest trading economy in the world and our second-largest export market in Asia. With our encouragement, Taiwan has taken dramatic strides toward democracy and the observance of human rights. All of these developments have provided the people of Taiwan the security to enjoy their prosperity, and recently a “cross-strait dialogue” between Taipei and Beijing has replaced the exchanges of shells that once were common in those waters.

Recognizing this, the Administration conducted the first comprehensive review of its Taiwan policy in 15 years and implemented significant adjustments in our unofficial relations with Taiwan. However, we will continue to reject proposals which would place at risk the peace and growth that Taiwan has achieved. We will not reverse the policies of six administrations of both parties. That would not be in our interest, and it would not serve the interest of the people of Taiwan.

With Russia, our global approach of supporting reform and integration includes welcoming it into the **Pacific** community. Russia is playing a constructive role in the ASEAN Regional Forum and is eager to join APEC. We have been encouraging Moscow to address the key issues which will allow it to improve its relations with Japan.

With Vietnam, the fullest possible accounting for our missing-in-action continues to be our highest priority. We also have important regional security and economic objectives, which improved relations will promote. Just last month, we opened a liaison office in Hanoi after favorably settling property and claims issues. We envisage that this liaison office will play an important role in encouraging progress in unilateral and joint Vietnamese efforts on MIAs and in furthering our other objectives, including human rights. As the President has said consistently, Vietnamese cooperation in accounting for missing servicemen remains the priority criterion for further progress in our bilateral relationship.

Our alliance relationships and forward military presence form the foundations for our Asian security policy. To supplement but not to supplant these foundations, the Administration also has explored new multilateral security dialogues in Asia. Working with ASEAN and other friends, the U.S. has supported the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum—ARF—the **Pacific’s** first broadly based consultative body concerned with security issues. An inclusive group, not directed against any country or bloc, the ARF had its historic first meeting in July 1994 and included the ASEAN countries, the U.S., Canada, Japan, Korea, Australia, and **New Zealand** as well as China, Russia, Vietnam, and others. We believe the ARF can play an important role in conveying governments’ intentions, easing tensions, promoting transparency, developing confidence, constraining arms races, and cultivating habits of consultation and cooperation on security issues.

Together with others, we also are laying the groundwork for a smaller forum for northeast Asia, an area where great powers have clashed historically and which is the locus of the region’s most urgent security challenges.

The Korean Peninsula represents the most critical security challenge in Asia. A major Administration accomplishment of 1994 was the successful negotiation of the Agreed Framework with North Korea.

The nuclear accord has received detailed attention in other hearings, so I will comment on it only briefly. We are confident that the more the Congress and the country examine the agreement, the more they will share our firm judgment that it fulfills America’s goals of promoting regional stability and curbing nuclear proliferation.

In this accord, we address the past, present, and future nuclear threats posed by North Korea. North Korea has agreed to allow inspections which the IAEA believes will shed light on how much plutonium North Korea produced in 1989-91. To be sure, clarification of the past is scheduled for a few years later than we would have liked. We judged that this delay was outweighed by the opportunity to deal effectively with the present and the future. The Agreed Framework obliges North Korea to freeze its nuclear capacity. So far it has done so. It has shut down its small nuclear reactor. It has sealed its reprocessing facility; the spent fuel rods will be safely encased and eventually shipped out. It has halted construction on its two large reactors. All of this is being verified by IAEA inspections and our own surveillance. North Korea has reversed itself and remains a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As for the future, North Korea will dismantle its entire nuclear program and, with outside help, substitute a nuclear energy system that is more resistant to proliferation. Moreover, as it implements the accord, North Korea will be progressively integrated into the region and the world, paving the way to greater stability in northeast Asia and, ultimately, to a resolution of the tragic division of the Korean Peninsula.

This agreement is not based on trust. In addition to international verification, there are built-in check-points along the path to implementation. To gain technical or economic benefits, North Korea must honor reciprocal obligations. North Korea derives no advantages that do not also promote regional and global stability. Moreover, the major financial costs will be borne by the international community.

In short, the Agreed Framework is of major benefit to the United States, to the region, and to the world. The R.O.K. supports the agreement for this reason, as do Japan and all other interested parties. The alternatives are dubious and dangerous. Those who are critical of the accord should present a better option. No one has done so.

Implementing the Framework will require perseverance by all concerned. We are working closely with South Korea, Japan, and others. The Framework stipulates that the south-north dialogue must be resumed. We insist that dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang develop in rough parallel with steps toward improved U.S.-D.P.R.K. relations. The future of the peninsula must be shaped by the Korean people themselves; the Framework can only succeed if there is a climate of civility and cooperation between the north and the south.

Freedom

Finally, there is the goal of freedom. Promoting freedom while balancing other objectives is the most complex challenge—conceptually and politically—that we face. It is a quest in which we get the least international support.

False prophets claim a contest of values between the United States—or the West—and an Asian monolith. They assert that Asians do not share universal aspirations for individual rights. Asian electorates and elected leaders would reject the notion that human rights are uniquely Western, or the implication that autocracy is intrinsically Asian. Most would agree with President Kim of South Korea that “respect for human dignity, plural democracy, and free market economics have firmly taken root as universal values.”

What is our approach? We are not trying to impose our form of society or ideals. Each country must find its own way, consistent with its history and culture. But international obligations to which countries have subscribed should be fulfilled. No government should violate the core value of human dignity as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each nation’s citizens should have the chance to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and the governments they elect should not be overturned by force. Many Asians have devoted their lives—and given their lives—for these values. Americans are bound to respect them.

In addition, we appeal to countries’ self interest. Experience teaches that sustained economic development is more likely where government policies are transparent, where courts provide due process, where uncensored newspapers are free to expose corruption and to debate economic policy, and where business people can make independent decisions with free access to information. Economic rights granted by authoritarians can as easily be taken away. The foundation of open economies—rights that protect contracts, property, and patents—can be guaranteed only by the rule of law.

The reality of Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan shows that accountable government is the bedrock of stability and prosperity. The reality of Burma and North Korea is that repression entrenches poverty.

The defense of liberty is not merely an idealistic endeavor. Enlarging freedom serves concrete American interests as well. The greatest threats to our security—and to Asia’s—come from governments that flout the rule of law at home and reject the rule of international law abroad. In 353 wars fought since 1819, not a single one was between two established democracies. Open, accountable governments do not practice terrorism or generate refugees. They make better trading partners.

Our goals remain constant. The President remains as committed as ever to the cause of freedom.

Consequently, we will continue to champion human and labor rights in Asia without arrogance or apology. We will do so where we have friendly relations—as the President did in Indonesia in his meeting with President Soeharto. We will do so where our interest in stemming the drug trade goes hand-in-hand with our interest in accountable government—as it does in Burma. And we will do so where we have an interest in positive engagement on many critical world issues— as we have in China.

Finally, we will continue our strong support for fledgling democracies. Last spring, Secretary Christopher participated in the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia and pledged our support for rebuilding Cambodia. Last month, Deputy Secretary Talbott visited Cambodia to reaffirm our support for the democratically elected coalition government.

Later this month, I will be traveling to Mongolia to review our programs for supporting Mongolia's transition to a democratic, free-market system.

Goals for the Coming Year

Mr. Chairman, the President and the Secretary of State have articulated a series of goals which the Administration will energetically and creatively pursue. In the context of the Administration's broad objectives, we will be working in the coming year on several important fronts in Asia. I will mention some of the more important ones briefly.

We will work determinedly to implement the U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework but not at the cost of our strong ties with the Republic of Korea. The task is complex; it will require sustained effort. We will establish KEDO and get it off to a constructive start. The selection of a South Korean reactor design is essential on financial, technical, and political grounds. We expect to establish diplomatic relations at the most basic level by opening a liaison office in Pyongyang, as foreseen in the agreement. North Korea will have an office here. In moving ahead on these fronts, we will insist that the north's undertaking to pursue the north-south dialogue be implemented faithfully. We hope by these efforts to move to a new stage in which we and the other countries concerned begin discussions on a more stable future for northeast Asia.

In APEC, our principal objective is to reach agreement at the Osaka leaders' meeting in November on an effective action agenda and blueprint for implementing the Bogor declaration on free trade, investment, and economic development. To this end, we will need to work closely with Japan, as chair; with other APEC members; with Congress; and with our private sector. A comprehensive work plan that addresses liberalization, facilitation, and cooperation is essential to sustaining APEC's credibility as a vehicle for economic growth.

During this year, we will be reaffirming with Japan our security relationship and working to strengthen cooperation on our common agenda. This 50th anniversary year of the end of the war in the **Pacific** is a time which both our government and that of Japan wish to use to rededicate ourselves to cooperation for future peace and prosperity. At the same time, we will continue to work on outstanding economic issues— most importantly in the auto sector—and Japan's plans for economic deregulation.

We will pursue our strategy of comprehensive engagement with China. We hope we can successfully conclude important bilateral negotiations on IPR protection and market access. If not, we will have no choice but to use the provisions of our trade law. We will continue the multilateral negotiations on China's admittance to the WTO. We will continue our limited bilateral military dialogue, with a view to encouraging greater openness and transparency on the part of the Chinese military. We will continue to raise human rights issues vigorously, through bilateral visits and through multilateral channels such as the UN Human Rights Commission meeting. We will search for cooperation where we can find it on regional issues and global challenges.

We will further develop regional security dialogues in the new ASEAN Regional Forum and elsewhere. Our hope is that patient diplomacy will build consensus for a meaningful ARF work program that will encompass both confidence-building measures and cooperation in areas of mutual benefit, such as peace-keeping or disaster relief. At the same time, we will lay the groundwork for a separate sub-regional dialogue on security issues in the critical northeast Asia sector.

We also will advance our many other interests. We will strengthen ties with ASEAN, whose countries together are our fourth-largest market and a force for stability and growth in the region.

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We will pursue our strategy of comprehensive engagement with China. We hope we can successfully conclude important bilateral negotiations on IPR protection and market access. If not, we will have no choice but to use the provisions of our trade law. We will continue the multilateral negotiations on China's admittance to the WTO. We will continue our limited bilateral military dialogue, with a view to encouraging greater openness and transparency on the part of the Chinese military. We will continue to raise human rights issues vigorously, through bilateral visits and through multilateral channels such as the UN Human Rights Commission meeting. We will search for cooperation where we can find it on regional issues and global challenges.

We will further develop regional security dialogues in the new ASEAN Regional Forum and elsewhere. Our hope is that patient diplomacy will build consensus for a meaningful ARF work program that will encompass both confidence-building measures and cooperation in areas of mutual benefit, such as peace-keeping or disaster relief. At the same time, we will lay the groundwork for a separate sub-regional dialogue on security issues in the critical northeast Asia sector.

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We will persistently seek full cooperation in accounting for our POWs and MIAs in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Russia, China, and North Korea. We will strengthen ties with Australia and **New Zealand**. We will press for political openness in Burma. We will continue our support for the elected governments in Cambodia and Mongolia. We will continue to support democracy, human rights, and reform throughout the region, working in part through effective non-governmental organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy and the Asia Foundation. We will seek practical progress on law enforcement, environmental, and other global issues.

Conclusion

Broad public and congressional support is critical for our policy. A prosperous, stable, and open Asia-**Pacific** region is neither only a Republican nor only a Democratic cause. While we will see debate and even disagreement over the next two years, I am optimistic that our **Pacific** quest will enjoy bipartisan support.

Some see a **Pacific** community as a distant if not unrealistic vision. In fact, it is being shaped now by our actions and those of others. Clearly, building such a community will take persistence and patience. We cannot force its definition, nor should we forfeit our difference. The diversity of the Asia-**Pacific** region is a reality we recognize and respect. Its distinctions will be a major source for the region's future dynamism.

Nevertheless, the contours of commonality are surfacing in the **Pacific**. Trade is linking economies, telecommunications are transcending borders, and transportation is shrinking distance. Business people are spurring regional integration. Diplomats are strengthening regional institutions.

This is the 50th anniversary year of the end of World War II. This commemoration of past sacrifice reminds us of our responsibility to the next generation of young Americans and Asians. It provides an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to shaping a **Pacific** community that is richer, safer, and freer. Thank you.

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